

Dr. Rick Melmer  
Cabinet Secretary  
South Dakota Department of Education  
& Cultural Affairs  
700 Governors Drive  
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-2291

Dear Secretary Melmer:

During the week of March 22-25, 2004, a team from the U.S. Department of Education's Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs (SASA) reviewed the South Dakota Department of Education's administration of Title I, Parts A and B programs of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Enclosed is a report based upon that review.

The reauthorization of ESEA under NCLB brought a major shift in emphasis and priorities for education at all levels in this country. With increased emphasis on accountability for all students, and a focus on States' responsibilities to work with districts and schools to improve instruction and boost student achievement, SASA is committed to working closely with States in these areas and has developed a monitoring process aligned to the changes brought about by NCLB. Under this process, monitoring is conducted in three broad areas – accountability, instructional support, and compliance with fiduciary responsibilities. In preparation for the monitoring visit and the onsite review, SASA staff conducted a number of activities (described in detail in the enclosed report) to verify compliance with applicable statutes and regulations.

The enclosed report contains a listing of the critical monitoring elements in each of the areas, a description of the scope of the monitoring review, and the findings, recommendations and commendations that the team cited as a result of the review. Within 30 days of the date of this letter, please provide us with a detailed description of the actions your office has taken or will take regarding any findings noted in this report.

The SASA team would like to thank Diane Lowery and her staff for their hard work and the assistance provided prior to, and during, the review in gathering materials and providing access to information in a timely manner. The team was impressed with the efforts of your staff to implement statewide the many requirements of Part A and Part B of Title I of NCLB.

We look forward to working further with your staff members on any follow-up activities, and in assisting them to improve the delivery of Title I services in South Dakota.

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn C. Jackson, Ed.D.  
Acting Director  
Student Achievement and  
School Accountability Programs

Enclosure  
cc: Diane Lowery

